A

LETTER

TO THE

WORTHY AND INDEPENDENT

ELECTORS OF SHREWSBURY.

BY JAMES MASON, ESQ.

Some shout him, and some hang upon his car
To gaze in 's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy:
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and, turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve:
Why? what has charm'd them? hath he sav'd the State?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? no.
Inchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in their's
Wrought this disturbance. TASK—B. 6.

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1807.

LETTER

A LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THE late conteſt aſſumed in its progreſs a form more important than uſually belongs to a ſtruggle for a ſeat in parliament between oppoſing candidates. Principles were avowed, paſſions and feelings were appealed to, and excited, which, whether right or wrong, valuable or pernicious, are ſo awful in their nature, and extenſive in their conſequences, as to claim the attentive examination of every reflecting mind. When you and I ſhall have long been ſleeping in the grave, the conduct you have adopted may not ceaſe to operate. It is, therefore, from an anxious wiſh to recall you to a full

conſideration of the political principles and ſentiments, which have lately been exhibited amongſt you, (I mean of courſe to include the whole period from October laſt to the preſent time) that I beg to claim a few moments of your attention; premiſing, however, that I principally addreſs myſelf to thoſe, who ſhewed by their votes that they coincided with the popular cry. You have refuſed to hear any perſonal addreſs from me; I have not forced myſelf upon an unwilling audience. You have covered me with abuſe, which, I ſhall preſume to ſay, I did not deſerve at your hands. Will you read and inveſtigate this letter?

Firſt, I muſt ſtate, that whatever appears in the following pages can attach no reſponſibility upon any perſon but myſelf. If any opinion or ſentiment they may convey ſhould excite your indignation, that indignation muſt fall upon me alone. However I may regret the return by which we loſe Mr. Bennett as our repreſentative, I do not write under his ſanction, nor are his opinions at all implicated in the fate of mine. If any obſervation of mine ſhall increaſe his popularity amongſt you, I ſhall deeply rejoice; but it would be the height of injuſtice to involve him in any common cenſure. It is becauſe I think

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the following conſiderations important, that I recommend them to your notice. I entreat you to examine them, becauſe I believe inveſtigation will lead you to adopt them. I implore you to ſupport them, not becauſe I diſtruſt my cauſe, but its advocate.

The beſt mode of examining the propriety of our conduct through the progreſs of the late conteſt will be, to recall to our recollection its foundation and origin. Seven months ago, when the diſſolution of the laſt parliament but one took place, the repreſentation of the borough was in a moſt unfortunate ſtate. Not that I ever aſcribed the evil, of which I was amongſt the firſt and loudeſt to complain, to any deliberate deſign to overthrow your liberties, cruſh your privileges, injure your intereſts, or diſgrace your character; but to a difference of opinion, which ſome are ſtill much diſpoſed to entertain, upon the tendency of ſuch a repreſentation with regard to thoſe liberties and privileges, thoſe intereſts, and that character. In common with many amongſt you, I was prepared to come to iſſue upon theſe points. At the very meeting, however, to which we were ſummoned for the purpoſe of expreſſing our opinion upon the then ſtate of the repreſentation, the evil was declared

to be entirely removed, by the voluntary reſignation of one of the parties, to whom it was aſcribed, who thus ſacrificed the higheſt object of his ambition, the proudeſt ſupport of his family honours, to your anticipated wiſhes. Not long afterwards, the venerable head of that branch of the ſame family, to which we were indebted for this act of diſintereſted deference, having repreſented the county for a period of thirty years, finding his health unequal to the duties of his high ſtation, alſo reſigned his ſeat. Now I put it to the reflecting good ſenſe, and to the returning honourable feeling of the inhabitants of Shrewſbury, whether, under ſuch circumſtances, the loud, domineering clamour that was raiſed, not only againſt undue influence, but againſt the influence of landed property altogether, pointed and directed avowedly againſt the clergy, the nobility, and the gentry of the county, abſurd, perverſe, and monſtrous as it would be at all times, whether, under ſuch circumſtances, ſuch a clamour was not peculiarly lamentable? whether thoſe ſenſations of pride and ſelf-elevation, which naturally ariſe in the breaſt of every man on the exerciſe of the high privilege of his elective franchiſe, ought not to have been more than divided at ſuch a criſis, with a ſentiment of gratitude, affection, and regret? I was taught to

love the people, even in their deluſions. Had fortune placed me in a ſituation, which had given me in any meaſure the command of the bleſſings and rewards of life, aſſuredly, next to the pleaſures of domeſtic intercourſe, the prize I ſhould have moſt warmly contended for, would have been the approbation and applauſe of the people; becauſe I believe them to be at once loyal and free, at once grateful and independent, at once ſpirited and ſubordinate. The popular cry on this occaſion, however, gave me no pleaſure; nor ſhall I ever regret that I did not join it. On the contrary, had I been fortunate enough to obtain your attention on the day of nomination in October, agreeing upon public principles with him, from whom I could never differ upon any ſerious ſubject without pain, I ſhould have given my feeble ſupport to Mr. Hill, as ſtanding before you and claiming your favour on grounds, not the leſs independent becauſe he was countenanced by the neighbouring gentlemen. You, however, transferred the vehemence of your applauſe to his opponent, and you received and welcomed againſt him, with expreſſions of approbation, which have happily been diſproved by your votes, a charge of political corruption. Of this charge I ſhall beg to ſpeak immediately.

On the ſubject of the influence of property at elections, more ought to be ſaid than falls within my ability, or the limits I have preſcribed to myſelf in this letter. It involves nothing leſs than the fundamental principles of that ſyſtem of government, which was adopted at the Revolution of 1688, and by which our preſent ſituation is to be diſtinguiſhed from the times of the Tudors and the Stuarts. "At the Revolution," obſerves the firſt of political philoſophers, "the crown, deprived for the ends of the revolution itſelf of many prerogatives, was found too weak to ſtruggle againſt all the difficulties which preſſed ſo new and unſettled a government. The court was obliged, therefore, to delegate a part of its powers to men of ſuch intereſt as could ſupport, and of ſuch fidelity as could adhere to, its eſtabliſhment. Such men were able to draw in a greater number to a concurrence in the common defence. This connexion, neceſſary at firſt, continued long after convenient; and, properly conducted, might indeed in all ſituations, be an uſeful inſtrument of government. At the ſame time, through the intervention of men of popular weight and character, the people poſſeſſed a ſecurity for their juſt portion of importance in the ſtate. Men acted as if they could receive as well

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as confer an obligation. The influence of government, thus divided in appearance between the court and the leaders of parties, became in many caſes an acceſſion rather to the popular than to the royal ſcale, and ſome part of that influence, which would otherwiſe have been poſſeſſed as in a ſort of mortmain and unalienable domain, returned again to the great ocean, where it roſe, and circulated amongſt the people. This method, therefore, of governing by men of great natural intereſt, or great acquired conſideration, was viewed in a very invidious light by the lovers of abſolute monarchy. It is the nature of deſpotiſm to abhor power held by any means, but its own momentary pleaſure, and to annihilate all intermediate ſituations between boundleſs ſtrength on its own part, and total debility on the part of the people." It is impoſſible to aſſent to the truth of theſe obſervations, and to refuſe the neceſſary conſequence of admitting them; which demonſtrates the propriety of returning to parliament gentlemen poſſeſſing that influence of property, you have been ſo eager to condemn, as it is from this claſs ſitting in the legiſlature, either by inheritance or by election, that the men and parties alluded to by Mr. Burke are to be taken. It is true, indeed, that of late years, and in great

meaſure ſince the publication of the tract I have now quoted, a new ariſtocracy has ariſen to ſuch a pitch of ſplendor, opulence, and conſequence, as to aim at dividing the offices of ſtate with the ancient proprietors of land. This is a point that requires all the attention of the people of England, and it behoves you deeply to conſider whether, generally ſpeaking, it is deſirable to give popular encouragement to mercantile ſtateſmen. Such encouragement goes to extinguiſh the ſalutary and brilliant ſentiment attending hereditary honours, and to ſubſtitute for it that feeling, which is the general conſequence of ample, though newly acquired wealth. As, in defiance of ſo much clamour for independance, while human nature remains as it is, property will always be power, acting upon men's minds by the hopes it inſpires, or the preſent good it confers, it becomes you to inveſtigate whether it will not be better for the country ſtill to maintain as much as poſſible, by your countenance, that ſpirit which politically refines the coarſer ſentiment attending mere wealth. I contend for neither of theſe feelings in the abſtract; but as they will always exiſt, the queſtion is, which you will prefer. In examining this ſubject, another point occurs, whether merchants, or their immediate deſcendants,

are likely to be as good ſtateſmen, as the landed proprietors we have been accuſtomed to; whether it is not probable that they will be too fond of war, and too much addicted to detail, to embrace all the conſequences of great political meaſures. Is there not alſo ſome danger that they will be induced to forfeit ſomething of their independance, in order to attain honours now only wanting to illuſtrate their riches? Whichſoever of theſe claſſes of men we prefer, it is neceſſary that we make no ſeparation between them; and however we may differ upon the choice of thoſe who, according to Mr. Burke, are to be the means of returning and circulating amongſt the people the power they have themſelves given to the executive, we muſt all unite in admiring that order in our conſtitution, that nicely graduated progreſſion, down which the eye is conducted from the height of the throne to the cottage of the meaneſt peaſant; interrupted by no gap, offended with no abruptneſs, conveying to the well conſtituted mind that idea of immovable ſtability, which ever ariſes from exquiſite proportions. Let us beware how we rudely break in upon ſuch a ſyſtem; from its very excellence, the fineneſs of its proportions, the delicacy of its

its cement, it may eaſily be deſtroyed: to build it up again, may be the vain effort of ages.

But if the rejection of gentlemen poſſeſſing the influence of property is to be deprecated upon this general view, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, on looking downwards from the ſeat of government, what would be its immediate conſequences upon ourſelves, as electors and inhabitants of a borough? We muſt have ſome repreſentative. We refuſe, however, every perſon, who can influence us by his property in the neighbourhood; or, which is the ſame thing, we treat him ſo inſolently, that no gentleman will think a ſeat in parliament worth having at the price we demand. We then fall into the hands of ſome political adventurer, ſome emiſſary of a faction, who has no intereſts in common with our own, no affections or attachments which he partakes with us, who makes us the creatures of his ſelfiſh views, and the mere tools of his party, and who will flatter and cringe to us, in order that he may be inſolent to others in his turn. Or we are bought up wholeſale by ſome rich merchant, probably equally unknown to us, whom we aſſiſt in expelling the old landed ariſtocracy from the parliament, and conſequently from official ſituations

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and connexions. Then in a moment, together with the loſs of our beſt ſecurity for political and conſtitutional liberty, are burſt aſunder all thoſe narrow ties, all thoſe local attachments and affections, all thoſe long mutual ſervices, all thoſe perpetually accumulated obligations, which it was formerly thought the higheſt pride of good men to feel and obey. We ſhut out from ourſelves how much that is liberal in education, how much that is beneficent in views, holy and ſanctified in morality, — pure in honour, ſoftening and ameliorating in manners. The times of good taſte and manly pleaſures paſs away; the naſal twang of the conventicle alone rouſes us to action, and the good open, honeſt face of the old Engliſh gentleman is once more exchanged for the perpetual ſneer of the independant, or the unearthly ſtiffneſs of the puritan. And why is this? for ſome unintelligible, undefinable good, the enflamed and intoxicated viſion of ſome wretched dreamer, who founds his claims to the character of the patriot, on the renunciation of the feelings of the man. The firſt ſymptom of the high degree of liberty he offers you, will be the diſappearance of all thoſe you were taught by your forefathers to love and cheriſh. They will take their ſtand behind the broad impaſſable line you

yourſelves

yourſelves have drawn. Complete retirement and the pleaſures of the metropolis will form the alternative of their lives; and aiming at what you term freedom, you will bring back, not the ſeverity, (that, thank God, is impoſſible) but the diſtance of feudal tyranny.

But you fear, that by encouraging any feelings of regard for the neighbouring gentry, you ſhall endanger your independance. This independance, I am afraid, is not unlike Falſtaff's valour: it makes a great bluſter, but is it ſteady in the hour of conteſt? Does it admit no compromiſe, does it ſcorn the offered bribe? Undoubtedly there is nothing better, nothing more worthy our admiration, than a man in a humble ſituation of life, whoſe circumſtances do not raiſe him above feeling conſiderable convenience from pecuniary favours, exerciſing his beſt judgment on the merits of different candidates, and giving an uninfluenced, uncorrupted vote to thoſe he may thus prefer. Whoever that man may be, his pure and humble patriotiſm muſt be conſidered as acceptable an offering to his country, as the thunder of a Chatham, or the bravery of a Nelſon; and it is the conviction that many ſuch men exiſt, which affords one of the ſtrongeſt motives for thoſe higher exertions,

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of which a Chatham or a Nelſon are alone capable; but in proportion as we award the civic crown to the honeſt voter, muſt we deteſt and abhor thoſe noiſy hypocrites, who, for the ſake of perſonal conſequence and aggrandizement, or the ſtill more diſgraceful motive of a bribe, trick themſelves out in this garb. As to bribery in itſelf, certainly the giver is much more culpable than the receiver. It is the cry of Independance in this caſe that diſguſts; it is the affectation of extraordinary purity which is to be abhorred.

In our caſe, it appears to me that our independance was not in queſtion. Three gentlemen were candidates for our favour, of different connexions, and all, till very lately, I believe, of different politics. One was a Pittite, another a Foxite; and a third was ſaid to belong to a minority of three, ſo that his whole party, if indeed they could ſo far agree, might concert their meaſures as they went to and from the Houſe of Commons, in one chariot. But the pleaſure of ſupporting the proteſtant religion by raiſing the innocent cry of "No Popery!" and other motives no doubt equally laudable, have at length given this gentleman decidedly to the preſent adminiſtration. It is to be hoped he

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will take his party along with him; particularly as the financial reforms, for recommending which they were ſo celebrated, may otherwiſe be waved.

To return to the ſubject of our independance, more locally conſidered. It cannot be too often enforced, that independance does not neceſſarily involve oppoſition. Like all the other virtues, it is a calm, temperate ſentiment; firm and immovable in reſiſting attack, but grateful, even to exceſs, for ſacrifices made and obligations conferred. It is difficult to draw any exact line for the management of a mere feeling, which is thrown out into public play without any exact points on which to fix. If, however, with a total diſregard of effects and conſequences, an abſtract ſentiment is to become the rule of our public conduct, perhaps the beſt mode of regulating it will be by tracing it back through the paths of private intercourſe. There is perhaps no truer or more pleaſing mode of illuſtrating public impreſſions, than by ſuppoſing the community in general to be a large family, where the domeſtic feelings are merely ſpread over a larger ſurface. Some amongſt you, who have families, will perhaps confeſs with a ſigh, the total deſtruction of happineſs which takes place,

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when one of your children, ſetting himſelf up for a free, independent thinker upon all ſubjects, and all modes of conduct, contradicts you, to ſhew what he calls ſpirit; and acts in conſtant defiance of your wiſhes, that he may appear before the world his own maſter. If you endeavour to pleaſe him, he calls you mean and cowardly; if you oppoſe him, you are harſh and tyrannical; if you are gloomy and depreſſed, he is full of riot and merriment; if you are in ſpirits, he is moroſe and ſullen; he watches the changes of your temper, that he may aſſume the garb you are leaving off. In the agony of broken peace and blighted promiſe, you pour your lamentations into the boſom of your friend. At the very moment when your bowed and drooping head declares the poignancy of your anguiſh, this ſtern, uncontroulable deſtroyer of your ſocial comforts has alſo found his friend, whom he accoſts with the tone of high-bounding exultation, with elevated ſtep, and rapture flaſhing from his eyes, in the proud triumph of an aſſertor of his independance. If you diſlike this family picture, as ill ſuited to the preſent ſtate of ſociety in this country, recollect how much you have ſometimes ſuffered from the reſtleſs jealouſy of a friend, who, fearful of bending to your opinion upon any ſubject, oppoſes you in

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all your words and actions, ſolely for the pleaſure of contradicting you. Whatever you concede, you find that ſomething more is expected from you; and whatever advances you make, you diſcover that you have ſtill further to go. Some claim ſtill remains unſettled, ſome difficulty unſolved; till even ſeparation becomes preferable to the fatigue of purſuit, the anxiety of ſuſpence, and the intolerable ſickneſs of hope deferred. Is this independance a virtue? And, in public or political life, is that independance more a virtue, which feels no ſacrifices, owns no favour, acknowledges no obligation — but which, on the contrary, founds freſh demands on ſucceſſive grants, and riſes in clamorous inſolence in proportion to the gratification of its wiſhes? A ſeparation of the orders of the ſtate? a line of diviſion between the rich and the poor? We ſhall yet be ſaved from that worſt of evils. It is much the ſafer mode, in all public affairs, to argue from actions rather than feelings, and from effects rather than abſtract principles.

I was certainly moſt anxious to oppoſe the repreſentation of the borough being veſted in one family, and for the three following reaſons: 1. Such a repreſentation prevented a fair competition here; it narrowed the market; it ſaid

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to all the world, The place is our own; here no new candidates ſhall come; all offers ſhall be made according to our own terms; we ourſelves come from one point, and all other avenues are barred and guarded by our power: whatever talent, whatever rank, whatever virtue may be propoſed to your admiration, you ſhall be excluded from the advantages of ſuch qualifications, unleſs they are found in us.—2. It diminiſhed the capacity of ſervice above, by entruſting thoſe intereſts, whether in the legiſlature or before the throne, to one family, which you might have confided to two ſeparate, unconnected families; and it deprived you of the chances of advantage ariſing from different connexions taking oppoſite ſides in politics.—3. It was a ſtate highly diſgraceful to your corporate character; becauſe any man, upon hearing that you were repreſented by two gentlemen of one family, would immediately conclude that you were a cloſe borough, belonging to that family. Such were the reaſons which actuated my friends and myſelf in oppoſition to the repreſentation which exiſted ſeven months ago, at the diſſolution of the laſt parliament but one. Before, however, we could complain, the evil was removed; before we could expreſs our wiſhes, they were all granted.

The impulſe, however, was given to the public mind, and it ceaſed not with its cauſe. The well-grounded oppoſition to the power of one family, ended in a violent clamour againſt all the neighbouring gentry.

But you will draw a lamentable and pathetic picture of exiled tenants, and threatened tradesmen, and aſk, if the exerciſe of menaces is no abuſe of influence, and that in its worſt form? I anſwer, that ſuch conduct is moſt highly reprehenſible, either in agents or friends; that it cannot be condemned too ſeverely. I know not if it exiſted; but ſure I am, your meaſures went to provoke it. The landed intereſt made you a ſacrifice; in return, you declared war againſt the landed intereſt. You raiſed a terrific clamour, you burnt in effigy, you threatened with the bludgeon and the knife. Imagining theſe reſources too mild and temperate for your purpoſe, you have now added the terrific yell of "No popery!" Such has been your vehemence, and ſo enthuſiaſtic your antipathy, that none of thoſe conſiderations which generally rule the human mind have had the leaſt weight with you. The unitarian diſſenter toaſts Church and King, with all the zeal of a proſelyte. Methodiſts, anabaptiſts, thoſe who can

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ſee only by the new light, and thoſe who are too proud to avail themſelves of any light — independants, ſaints, unitarians, trinitarians, men who never in their lives could paſs each other without a ſneer of contempt, or a defiance to controverſy, have now joined in one general acclamation on the Danger of the Church!

While you were thus indignantly throwing back the obligation you had received; while, in the midſt of contumelious ravings, you ſeemed to array yourſelves in oppoſition to the clergy, the gentry, and the nobility of the county, did you imagine that they would kneel before you, flattering the inſane and capricious fury of a mob, after having in vain ſacrificed to your juſtice? Do you ſuppoſe, that you alone of all the world are gifted with the virtues of courage and independance, and that rank, fortune, and education, only make men mean and cowardly?

Of preciſely the ſame falſe and hollow nature, as this cry for Independance, has been the cry againſt a Coalition. There is no end of this ſenſeleſs ſacrifice of reaſon to mere ſound. It might really be imagined, that the word Coalition conveyed the idea of ſome malignant abſtract vice, to be added to ingratitude, cruelty,

calumny, avarice, and the like. When I conſider the ſituation of the town of Shrewſbury, I can define a coalition between two candidates in no other language than by calling it a mutual expreſſion of good-will to each other. The impropriety of ſupporting this expreſſion by menaces, is another queſtion, of which I have already ſpoken. Even violent entreaties from any gentleman for the colleague he would prefer, ought to be diſapproved of, though rather as an inſtance of bad taſte on the part of the requeſtor, than any injury to you ſo requeſted. For you to fall into a furious popular rage on ſuch an occaſion, and for ſuch a reaſon, is perfectly ridiculous. Suppoſe a borough of four hundred voters, to whom, as is ſometimes the caſe, three candidates offer themſelves, who have no neighbouring property, and no family connexion with thoſe who poſſeſs it. Here the queſtion of influence of property does not exiſt. Two of the candidates canvaſs jointly, the third by himſelf. At the cloſe of the poll it appears that the coaleſced candidates had 201 votes each, while the third candidate had 199 plumpers. Under theſe circumſtances, why are not the electors who exerciſed their full privilege by dividing their votes, as independent as thoſe who gave their ſuffrages for one perſon only?

Again,

Again, let us bring the caſe nearer our own, by imagining that all the three candidates are equally connected with the borough, by neighbouring property and family connexions, is the concluſion altered? The ſtatement I have made is as favourable for you as poſſible; but in our own inſtance we muſt remember, that Mr. Bennett and Mr. Hill never avowed a coalition, never canvaſſed together; that in politics and connexion they are as wide from each other as poſſible; that they did not even expreſs their mutual good wiſhes, notwithſtanding their long friendſhip, till long after the conteſt had begun; till they were induced to ſuch an expreſſion by perceiving that their opponent had preoccupied ground, which really belonged to them; till they found themſelves, to their equal ſurprize and vexation, oppoſed by the popular voice; which was raiſed in ſupport of pretenſions, which Mr. Bennett in particular knew and felt to be his own. They found the cauſe in which they were engaged infinitely more important than they imagined it would be, when they were called upon to reſiſt a deluded faction, whom no obligations could ſoften, no ſacrifices content; who, under the ſhelter of venerable names, were purſuing a conduct tending to the utter deſtruction of all ſocial order; urging on

their deſperate career againſt whatever is reſpectable and honourable in the county; confounding all terms, miſtaking inconſiſtency for independance, licentiouſneſs for freedom, the abuſe of advantages for the advantages themſelves; calling the ſalaries annexed to laborious ſervices the wages of corruption; the performance of miniſterial duties hoſtility to the people; an honourable attachment to party, a mode of tyrannizing by many; and who, thus tricked out in I know not what political tinſel and gewgaws, were followed by the ſhouts of the thoughtleſs, giddy rabble, at once the ſharers and the victims of the triumph. Under theſe circumſtances, though I would wiſh to allow that a meaſure to which the people are always ſo hoſtile, ought never to be adopted, I certainly ſhould have felt no objection to a coalition. The neceſſity of the caſe, however, was poſtponed to your wiſhes, and a ſtrict neutrality was declared.

Leaving then the ſubject of independance, it muſt be ſaid, that an honeſt, unbiaſſed, uncorrupted, and incorruptible vote is above all price; and that a man who gives ſuch a vote in defiance of his poverty and his wants, upon a fair eſtimate, according to the beſt of his

abilities,

abilities, of the claims of any candidate, comparing his local pretenſions with his higher and parliamentary qualifications, is according to the ſtrict meaning of the term, and in its beſt ſenſe, *a patriot*. This title is his, pre-eminently his. May it long illuſtrate his humble dwelling, and deſcend to his children's children! While we have many ſuch patriots, our country is ſafe from within and from without; the citadel in the midſt of the waters is ſecure; the rock on which it ſtands is faſt. It is on account of the ineſtimable value of men of this ſtamp, that we ſhould be particularly vigilant againſt falſe pretenders to their character. Virtue is never in ſo much danger of being driven from the field, as when the foe borrows her armour and her weapons. In ſwelling the clamour of independance, it becomes us then to be for ever on our guard, leſt we are only gratifying ſome perſonal ambition, or ſome private pique; or leſt in the preſent ſtate of this country, we are merely transferring political conſequence from one ſpecies of property to another, exchanging commerce for land, and the bribe for influence. Various and numerous, no doubt, will be the auxiliary paſſions called in to aſſiſt this transf r. Old debts muſt be paid off: the diſſenter will have his account to ſettle

with the churchman, the trader with the ſquire, and the people, while they attend the counting-houſe for their bribe, will ſhout Independance, as if they were the pureſt of mankind. A contending gentry, and a people half fanatical and half hypocritical, with juſt enough of the enthuſiaſt to be deceived themſelves, and juſt enough of the knave to deceive others, will be the firſt conſequence of theſe unfounded aims at what is called independance. In the mean time, however, it is to be hoped that all men whoſe education (unfortunate it may be) has given them other pleaſures than field-preaching; whoſe taſte and habits ſupply them with other amuſements than the ledger; whoſe morality does not exhibit the whole duty of man in a ſolemn face, claſped hands, and a reſponſive groan—(it is well no frequenter of St. John's chapel is at my elbow); will follow the amuſements and the employments of their forefathers. I ſuſpect this new ſchool of independance moſt grievously. We may apply to it the words of Mr. Burke on another occaſion—"There is nothing in it for a gentleman to learn."

I now wiſh to make ſome obſervations upon the accuſation of corruption, which was brought againſt Mr. Hill on the day of nomination in

November

November laſt. The author I ſuſpect to be one of thoſe, who bend to the opinion aſcribed in the newſpapers to Sir Francis Burdett, namely, that any man who accepts a miniſterial appointment, renders himſelf an unfit candidate for popular favour. An opinion more pernicious, more inimical to the ends of good government, more detrimental to the liberty of the ſubject, never came from the lips of that intemperate and raſh politician. As if the influence of the people would be increaſed by depriving them of the only opportunity they poſſeſs, of paſſing an immediate opinion upon the conduct of their rulers; as if that conduct would be more pure, when entirely removed from the piercing eye of popular ſcrutiny; as if it were deſirable that an adminiſtration ſhould be formed from court favour only; as if the Houſe of Commons did not furniſh the moſt excellent ſtate of probation and diſcipline for miniſterial duty; as if, after having made every poſſible exertion to bring into office thoſe you have long thought the beſt and ableſt men in the country, you are to deſert them at the moment they may be really and effectively uſeful, and defeat all your moſt urgent wiſhes, juſt when they are about to be accompliſhed.

With regard to the individual charge of corruption againſt Mr. Hill, a plain ſtatement of the facts on which it is founded, will be its beſt refutation. During the laſt two years of Mr. Pitt's miniſterial career, Mr. Hill accepted a diplomatic miſſion to Ratiſbon. We all know enough of the ſtate of the continent at that period, and particularly the part of it where Ratiſbon is ſituated, to be convinced that ſuch an employment could be no ſinecure: that, on the contrary, it muſt have been attended with much anxiety, a heavy reſponſibility, and ſome perſonal danger. In accepting ſuch an office, then, Mr. Hill was not corrupt. It is uſual for miniſters thus choſen, to receive the ſalaries attached to their offices, from the time of their being appointed to that of the declared official termination of their functions. Mr. Hill, on being placed, by the ſtateſman he moſt revered, in a ſituation ſo calculated to flatter the beſt feelings of an honeſt pride, as opening to him a new and wider ſphere of public utility than he yet poſſeſſed, was ſubject to ſome feelings of alarm on account of his ignorance of your opinion upon the ſubject of his appointment. He felt, however, that on the diſſolution of parliament you would have an opportunity of expreſſing that opinion. In the mean time, he

gave

gave himſelf up to thoſe preparations, both of a pecuniary and political nature, which he thought neceſſary for his ſtation. Events entirely of a public nature occurred to prevent his embarkation, till at length it was evident that his poſt was totally untenable. Now in a pecuniary view, the ſums he expended in preparation were ſo much greater than thoſe he received from the treaſury, that he is very conſiderably a loſer by his appointment. I certainly have no objection to the ſyſtem you ſeem to have adopted, of bringing your repreſentatives at every ſucceſſive election to a ſtrict and rigid account for their public conduct. Only be fair and candid: employ, if you pleaſe, (as this ſeems the faſhion of the day) the beſt accountant amongſt you, to make an exact ablance according to the ſtricteſt rules of counting-houſe arithmetic, upon the ſums expended and the ſums received by Mr. Hill, and you will find that you, the public, are the debtors of my honourable friend. When you are in debt, acknowledge the obligation, in order that when the balance is in your favour, you may appear wiſe and liberal creditors; judges the more calm and impartial from being parties in the cauſe; not tyrannical exactors, or heated and unjuſt avengers: and let me preſume to hope that in thus

bringing

bringing your ſervants to account, you will not forget thoſe feelings of awe, anxiety, and ſuſpence, which neceſſarily wait upon your ſervice, with which all pecuniary conſiderations are totally unconnected, and which no pecuniary reward can ever compenſate. The miniſters of ſtate in this country are aſſuredly not paid too liberally; but the ſervice is proud and willing, becauſe you have the reputation of being generous and candid maſters. If ever you become unfair, rigid, or meanly exacting, men of honour and character will deſert you; and, having been firſt dragooned into ſilence and ſubmiſſion, you will be plundered to the laſt penny, without daring to complain. Extremes meet as well in politics as in morals: your prepoſterous independance, by producing a ſeparation between the orders of ſociety, leads directly to deſpotiſm; and your equally prepoſterous parſimony goes to introduce prodigality. You will obſerve, that the only plauſible inſinuation againſt Mr. Hill, is founded upon his continuing for about three months in his place, after the reverſes upon the continent entirely precluded him from exerciſing its duties. This period was characteriſed by the confuſion attending ſo important an event as the death of Mr. Pitt, and the transfer of power to new

hands.

hands. It is perhaps an unfortunate cuſtom to give in the form of a ſalary for an office avowedly expired, what would be more juſtly termed a compenſation for money expended, or, to uſe more official language, the diſcharge of a bill of extraordinaries. In caſes, however, ſuch as Mr. Hill's, the practice has been univerſal, and frequently to a much greater extent than was followed in his favour, and the public are gainers by the colluſion. At any rate, it is the cuſtom, not Mr. Hill, on whom you are to fix your condemnation. He is ſtill your creditor to a great amount, and it will be a degree of ſelf-deſertion, as pernicious to the public ſervice as to himſelf, if he does not perſevere in his juſt demands. He has certainly no great reaſon for delicacy on this ſubject.

Now I beg you to mark the cloſe of Mr. Hill's conduct thro' theſe tranſactions. When Mr. Pitt died, following his memory with that applauſe, which from full hands he had heaped upon him in his life, Mr. Hill, ſo far from ſtooping to any management, either for the purpoſes of compenſation, or a continuance in his office, under the impreſſion of the deepeſt ſorrow for the loſs he had ſuſtained, joined that party, the friends of Mr. Pitt, who were acting

againſt

againſt the exiſting adminiſtration. I have ſeldom had the pleaſure of agreeing with Mr. Hill in political opinions; but this difference has never prevented me from admiring his many excellent qualities, the ſincerity of his friendſhip, the ſteadineſs of his attachment, the power and verſatility of his underſtanding. I have ſtated the grounds of the charge which was brought againſt him, far more at length than it merits, out of reſpect to him, whom for local reaſons I conſider as a very fit repreſentative for the borough; and out of reſpect to you, who received it, unfortunately I muſt think for yourſelves, with ſomething more than willingneſs. The reſult of the poll in both the late elections has vindicated yourſelves and him.

Leaving Mr. Hill to the reflexions of his own mind, which will lead him to regard his accuſer as his conſtituent rather than his enemy, I muſt now beg your indulgence, (already I fear too long treſpaſſed upon) while I ſtate to you my reaſons more at large for having twice tendered an anxious, but ineffectual vote, in favour of Mr. Bennett. With feeble ability, but certainly with an ardent zeal in your ſervice, I had reſiſted by his ſide that mode of repreſentation, which will always receive my unqualified

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condemnation. At the commencement of this conteſt, and before the reſignation of Mr. John Hill was known, he was the perſon on whom the eyes of thoſe with whom I acted were naturally fixed, as the champion of the cauſe in which we thought ourſelves engaged. At the ſame time, I knew that he would find it difficult to decide, in that nice and delicate queſtion, which ranged on one ſide what ſeemed to him your intereſts, and on the other the apparent and perhaps real wiſhes of a man, whom he has long moſt highly valued. I knew, that if, from any reaſons, his opinions upon the propriety of ſtanding forward a candidate for your favour were nearly balanced, his great regard for Mr. Hill would at once prevent the offer of his ſervices. Accordingly, I had but faint hopes of ſeeing him amongſt us, though the temper of the borough certainly afforded him every reaſonable preſumption of ſucceſs, till he was informed of the reſignation of Mr. John Hill. Indeed his anſwer to the letter in which I preſſed him to offer himſelf at all events, contained a poſitive refuſal on the grounds I have ſtated: conveying, however, his ſettled and unchanged opinion upon the then repreſentation of the town. It cannot aſſuredly be neceſſary to vindicate Mr. Bennett for his conduct on

this occaſion, though I am aware that in making ſuch a conceſſion, I in ſome meaſure condemn myſelf. I however could find motives to the conduct I purſued, in valuable connexions within the town, which Mr. Bennett did not poſſeſs; though, even thus ſupported, I could not help feeling ſuſpicious of caſuiſtry in reaſonings, which drew me up in oppoſition to Mr. Hill. The election of Mr. Bennett appeared to me as fortunate as his defeat is lamentable; and he muſt certainly be regarded as ſtanding candidate for your favour on popular, or, (if you prefer the term) on independent grounds. His family, his party, the ſentiments of his nature, the principles of his life, all lean to the popular parts of the conſtitution. Thoſe muſt know little, very little of the human heart, who imagine that the ſacrifices he was prepared to make to his friendſhip for Mr. Hill, diſqualify him for ſupporting the privileges of the people. The virtues do not ſtand off from each other; private excellence is the only ſure foundation of public ſervice; and patriotiſm is but the vigour and maturity of the affections. Believing that we ſhould have found him a moſt uſeful repreſentative; convinced, that in elevating him we were ſerving ourſelves; I moſt ſincerely rejoiced in his election,

tion, and as ſincerely lament his defeat. When we compare the events of our conteſt with what has been paſſing on ſimilar occaſions in the country at large, it ſeems moſt evident that it is by that claſs of politicians, who moderately and firmly purſue a middle courſe, equally diſtant from prerogative ſtruggles and popular clamours, from the exertions of influence and the cry of independance, that this country will be ſaved, I will not ſay from convulſions, (I reſpect my countrymen too much to fear ſuch an evil) but from that reſtleſs jealouſy, that feveriſh aſſertion of counter-claims, which I have endeavoured to illuſtrate by an example drawn from private life, and which in its effect upon national buſineſs, or upon manners and ſocial intercourſe, will be almoſt as intolerable as anarchy itſelf. Now as anarchy commonly ends in ſlavery, ſo the ſtate which approaches anarchy, by alarming the executive power, tends in the ſame direction; and it is to be feared that the mercantile ariſtocracy, whoſe intereſt for a thouſand obvious reaſons it muſt be to keep well with all adminiſtrations, will be much more diſpoſed to take part againſt you, than the ancient proprietor of land would be. In how many directions, then, does the malady of this unreaſonable independance ſhoot forth! If this cry for inde-

pendance continues, if the feeling attached to it ſpreads, public and ſocial life will be poiſoned at its very ſource, and with ſo deſtructive a venom, that thoſe who drink of it, this people of England, ſo proud, and ſo juſtly proud, will ſicken at the heart.

But, gentlemen, if prudence, firmneſs, and moderation are deſirable at home, what ſhall we ſay of the continent, what ſhall we ſay of our foreign counſels? The continent! What a volume of woes does that word open before us! and how bitter is the aggravation that our experience has come too late to ſerve us. Still rooted in the belief, that if a policy exactly the reverſe to that which has been adopted, had been applied to France from the beginning of the revolution, that country, ſo far from having her limits extended almoſt indefinitely, would have been politically "blotted out from the map of Europe," that ſhe would have been humbled ſo low, as to be an object of pity even to her enemies; or long before this have returned to her former allegiance, I cannot help regretting, that in the election of our repreſentatives we have given two ſupporters to a party, who, in their abſtracted affection for war, deſpiſe all warnings of the paſt, and with a levity

equally

equally aſtoniſhing and criminal, reverſe the ſplendid ſentiment of the firſt of heroes, apparently deeming nothing loſt while any thing remains to be loſt. In the dreadful confuſion and darkneſs which now broods over the continent, it is moſt difficult to ſay which is adviſable, war or peace; but this is certain, that whether we negociate or fight, never were any virtues ſo awfully neceſſary as, at the preſent criſis, thoſe of caution, vigilance, ſteadineſs, and firmneſs. Theſe are not the times for mere coups de main; the world, which has been loſt by a ſeries of errors and calamities extended through fifteen years, will not be reſtored by a blow. Men, who cannot wait the reſult of great plans, who fear nothing ſo much as to loſe their character for vigour, whoſe whole ſtudy is to produce a momentary effect, no matter at what hazard; who think they cannot be wrong, provided there is a battle, are no longer for us. The mere pageants of a gaudy hour do not ſuit our day. We want men of reſolute but pacific natures; who know how to yield with dignity, in order that they may reſiſt with *real* vigour, and *laſting* effect; men, who are guided by no temporary deluſions, no momentary paſſions, but who, comparing the preſent with the paſt, and deducing the future from

ſuch a compariſon, can ſubmit to the dreadful reverſes of our times with a proud and tranquil patience, under the influence of the hope that the great and wiſe Providence which governs the world, will hereafter in its unſearchable wiſdom ſupply us with events, which, made uſe of under the ſevere inſtructions we have received, may at no diſtant time check the preſent miſchief, and repair its ravages.

Finally, I lament the defeat of Mr. Bennett, for a reaſon which appears to me ſhortly to embrace whatever I have now mentioned, as the perſonal and ardent admirer of the character and principles of our lately departed ſtateſman and patriot Mr. Fox. It is natural for men who bow to the immortal memory of that illuſtrious perſon, in the midſt of the cold and miſerable deſolation which now extends to the fartheſt point of our political horizon, to look out with painful anxiety for thoſe in a parliamentary capacity who venerated him when he was alive, and who will, as far as they are able, perpetuate the principles, both in our domeſtic polity and our foreign counſels, on which he acted. When we reflect upon the qualifications of that man, the mildneſs of his temper, the benevolence of his diſpoſition, the attractive

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ſoftneſs of his nature, his affection for his friends, his devotion to his country, united with the moſt ſtupendous powers of the underſtanding, and an eloquence which never failed but from the poverty of his ſubject; when we reflect, that theſe qualifications were perpetually exerted thro' the courſe of a long life in favour of civil and religious liberty, notwithſtanding every ſpecies of obloquy, reproach, and menace from the government, and little, very little applauſe from the people; ſupplying us with the moſt admirable principles on all momentous queſtions, upon the rights of the trial by jury, which he extended; upon the freedom of commercial intercourſe, which he promoted; upon colonial government, which he would have ſtrengthened by moderation; upon the due limits of taxation, which he preſcribed; upon reform in the repreſentation, which he inculcated; upon the enormities committed in our eaſtern empire, which he laboured to prevent and avenge; upon civil reſtrictions as to mere modes of faith, which, again and again, though deſerted by the ſectaries he would have ſerved, he exerted himſelf to remove; upon the ſlave trade, which he almoſt ſucceeded in aboliſhing, cut off indeed at the very moment when his precepts were no longer powerleſs; upon

peace with France, which, after perpetually recurring efforts to obtain from a diſtracted and an alarmed enemy, he died in endeavouring to ſecure, and might perhaps have ſecured, had his life been prolonged, and thus have ſaved at leaſt the deſtruction of one kingdom more from a foe exulting in the conqueſt of the greateſt part of Europe; when we add to theſe efforts, his firm and intrepid perſeverance along the middle line, where alone is rectitude, equally diſtant from the exertions of a terrified government and the inſane clamours of a deſperate faction, through the tremendous criſis of the French revolution, a perſeverance, to which we owe what yet remains of rational liberty to the civilized world; when, from theſe qualifications and labours, we turn aſide to remember that almoſt the only reward beſtowed on this man was the vain and tardy juſtice of a ſplendid funeral; is it very unreaſonable to expect, that the men Mr. Fox honoured with his friendſhip ſhould not be lightly ſuſpected of attacking popular privileges, or even th[illegible] ſhould receive the approbation and ſuffrages of part of the people of England? When the remains of this illuſtrious patriot, this great ſupporter and reſcuer of conſtitutional liberty, this apoſtle of tranquillity to afflicted Europe, are yet ſcarcely

cold

cold in the grave, is it very ſeemly for thoſe who profeſs themſelves the advocates of popular rights, to deſert his known friends and partizans, for an untried party, who ſeem to have no mode of attracting public notice but by the ſingularity, I had almoſt ſaid the ferocity of their opinions? Or is it to be for ever the caſe, that thoſe who, according to the meaſure of their abilities perform the duties of Mr. Fox, are to ſhare his fate? Mr. Fox had his faults; they are inſeparable from our nature; they too naturally grow out of virtues ſuch as his. But let us remember, that if ſometimes, tranſiently and accidentally, his paſſions puſhed his principles too far, it was according to the general tenor of his nature and his life, that his paſſions ſupported his principles, and his principles refined his paſſions. If, in one or two iſolated inſtances, he was not perhaps ſufficiently guarded in maintaining his ſentiments; if, under the influence and inſpiration of the great cauſe in which he was engaged, he once or twice alarmed the prudent and alienated the cold; when we conſider the bold and fearleſs character of his diſpoſition, and the inflamed temper of the times he lived in, it is rather a matter of ſurprize that his judgment was ſo ſeldom betrayed. If, on the other hand, he has incurred the cenſure of

ſome, for his occaſional concurrence with the views of a party, in oppoſition to whom he paſſed the greateſt part of his life; when we remember his natural connexions, and how prone he was to cultivate and indulge the ſocial feelings, we ſhould confeſs our aſtoniſhment that the ſacrifices he made were not greater. Taking a view of his character and life from the calm elevation in which we are placed by his death, it appears to me impoſſible to reſiſt the conviction, that in the powers of the underſtanding, and the qualities of the heart, he was endowed by nature with as liberal and profuſe a hand as ſhe ever ſhowered her advantages; that the gifts of fortune were incumbrances and hindrances to him, rather than bleſſings; that had the temptations of his youth been leſs, or the neceſſity for his exertions greater, his duties more urgent, or the acquiſition of fame leſs eaſy; no important queſtion would have remained unſubdued by him, no ſolemn and momentous truth, connected with the well-being of mankind, would not have been brought out from its hiding place, and expoſed intelligibly to the moſt careleſs eye; and that as his powers of elocution now rank him with the greateſt orators the world ever ſaw, ſo might his capacity of philoſophical inveſtigation, in the retired tranquillity,

quillity, for which the ſingular ſimplicity of his nature ſo eminently fitted him, have placed his name with Newton or Bacon, as his critical acumen, and the amuſements of his lighter hours, might have numbered him with Bentley and Porſon. The fond and anxious reconciler of the feelings of friendſhip with public duties; the ſervant of your welfare, not the flatterer of your caprices; the vigilant obſerver of your opinions, not the ſlave of your prejudices; the creature of your intereſts, but the proud contemner of your inſolence, Mr. Fox, I perſuade myſelf, would have approved of the conduct of Mr. Bennett through the progreſs of the late conteſt.

An objection was made to Mr. Bennett during the conteſt, by a gentleman, for whoſe ſpirit of conciliation, anxiety to ſerve the public and domeſtic virtues, I ſhould profeſs eſteem, did I not fear that theſe merits would afford a ſhelter to a conduct in others of the moſt pernicious and fatal tendency. The ſpeech to which I allude has been publiſhed; and I have read it with at leaſt as much attention as it deſerves, either in a critical or political view. The only objection he has brought againſt Mr. Bennett is on the ground of his being connected

with

with the peerage, and repreſenting the town together with Mr. Hill, who is alſo connected with the peerage. Here again we are in danger of being miſled by mere names and antiquated prejudices. It is ſuperfluous to enter into the queſtion, whether a perſon in Mr. Bennett's circumſtances, a ſecond ſon, his elder brother married, is not as much a country gentleman, as young men whoſe fathers are ſtill living uſually are. Allowing that a hundred years ago this objection might have been unanſwerable, who can take alarm at the influence of the peerage now, conſidered as a body of ariſtocracy? When we conſider to what an enormous and moſt unfortunate extent, (deſtroying all its beſt purpoſes, and aſſiſting you in ſubjugating the old ariſtocracy to the new) this order has been puſhed, and how completely it is incorporated with the gentry of the realm, how entirely the two ranks are blended and amalgamated togther; to dread, that by electing the ſon of an earl we ſhall encroach upon the rights of the commoner, ſeems to me an alarm only ſuitable to times long paſt. Moreover, when we reflect with what a laviſh hand the peerage has lately been encreaſed, if we are to reject a candidate, no matter what excellent qualifications he may poſſeſs, for no other reaſon

ſon than becauſe he is connected with that order; I fear we ſhall impoſe upon ourſelves a moſt pernicious limit in the choice of repreſentatives. Suppoſe ſuch a limit preſcribed by the legiſlature, and how would it appear? The truth ſeems to be, that in the preſent ſituation of affairs the peerage and gentry muſt be taken together, as forming one order called the Landed Intereſt, and as diſtinguiſhed, though not ſeparated, from the commercial intereſt, which is now ſpreading with ſuch ſplendid vigour over the face of the country. In this view of things, the juſtice of which occurs to my mind with great force, the fable, by which Mr. Hunt has illuſtrated his ideas in the notes to his ſpeech, evidently bears with equal ſeverity upon all the candidates; and he is the beſt member for the commercial intereſts, who has moſt devoted his mind to commercial ſubjects. Add to this, that at a time when a peerage is obtained with ſo much facility, as to be an object of no very laborious or unreaſonable ambition to almoſt every member of the Houſe of Commons, it may be doubted whether it may not be a poſitive advantage to be repreſented by a perſon, who, his family being already ennobled, cannot well be ſuppoſed to aſpire to the honours of a new and additional title. The attempt Mr.

Hunt

Hunt makes to ſhelter himſelf under the conſtitution is evidently ineffectual; for, as has been already obſerved in a pamphlet I have read, the law, by diſpenſing with the uſual qualification in favour of the eldeſt ſons of peers, facilitates rather than impedes that connexion with the Houſe of Commons our author diſapproves. The objection, therefore, which forms the ſum and end of the ſpeech before me, ſeems to me ſo far from being founded, as to be abſolutely erroneous. At all events, it cannot be allowed to weigh a moment againſt thoſe parliamentary qualifications of a perſonal nature, which at this criſis of our affairs ought to be ſo much the object of inveſtigation and attention.

My reaſons for tendering a vote in favour of Mr. Hill and Mr. Bennett were extremely ſtrengthened in my mind, by the public character of their opponent. This character, whether as diſplayed in parliament, or in immediate appeals to the people, appears to me to call down the moſt marked and decided reprobation. That to act with party in this country is the only mode of acting with effect, is ſo evident a deduction of all paſt experience, as to have acquired the force of an intuitive truth. That, in order to accompliſh any uſeful purpoſe, or defeat any

pernicious

pernicious meaſures, each individual muſt combine with others, allowing the neceſſity of making trifling ſacrifices of private feeling and opinion to the preſervation of general union, is an aſſertion, no man at all converſant with the world will venture to contradict. Indeed there muſt be ſomething radically wrong in that ſyſtem, under which a man ſo entirely reſigns all ſocial feelings, as in an aſſembly of 650 gentlemen, ſome of high official character and wiſdom, others the favourites of the popular voice, all of liberal and enlightened education, ſtill to ſtand alone, to chooſe a line of conduct from which it is impoſſible to conjecture what will be his deciſion on any particular queſtion, and to give a ſolitary vote, unleſs variety of opinion has a narrower boundary than his inclination. It does indeed ſometimes happen, that for this total loſs of all ability to be uſeful in a parliamentary capacity, ſome compenſation is afforded in a moral view, by perceiving that the adopter of ſuch a conduct, it may be, in the undiſciplined ardour of youth, is the honeſt and amiable victim of ſome high notions of liberty and independance (ſuch as now actuate ſome of you); and that if he does not agree with the reſt of the world, it is becauſe he fancies himſelf above them. Such men are benevolent, even to exceſs:

ceſs: a due and well regulated regard to their own intereſts they term ſelfiſhneſs; or, if they have any private views, it is fame only to which they aſpire: the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of tyranny or cruelty on the part of government, puts in requiſition all the faculties of their nature: even the common progreſs of its functions they ſcrutinize with indefatigable ſeverity: effects and conſequences are nothing with them, in compariſon with abſtract feelings and principles: their aim is to indulge a favourite ſentiment, rather than to enſure the ſucceſs of their ſchemes: pure, honourable, and diſintereſted, they lead us to lament the waſte and abuſe of virtue, rather than to condemn the exhibition of any poſitive and grounded error. I fear, however, we muſt in vain apply ſuch an apology to the public eccentricities of a man, who on the ſolemn and awful queſtion of the Slave Trade gave no vote: who, when the ſituation of the Iriſh Catholics was diſcuſſed, oppoſed thoſe healing meaſures, which went to unite with us in a heartfelt connexion a generous and a loyal people, and aſſiſted to perpetuate laws, which now anſwer no end but to impoſe diſabilities for offences it is impoſſible to commit, and to keep alive feelings of ſeparation and irritation, which otherwiſe would expire with the

oppreſſions and burdens long ſince paſt, and who now, openly glorying in his conduct upon that occaſion, calls upon you to ſanction it by that horrid cry, the conſequences of which were once ſo dreadful as to make reaſon and humanity alike ſhudder at even the poſſible repetition of them: who, during a feeble and inefficient adminiſtration, purſued the meaſures of government with his applauſe, till that preciſe moment, when the miniſter eſtabliſhed his commiſſions for enquiry into the public expenditure with a view to reform and frugality. It cannot, I will venture to aſſert, it cannot be from the love of popular privileges, or of political œconomy, that ſuch a man reſigns the ſocial feelings, breaks all natural connexions, and boldly declares war againſt all eſtabliſhed, venerable, and ſacred authority. It cannot be from the love of liberty, that ſuch a man calls upon you to aſſert an extravagant and unintelligible degree of independance, and talks of your emancipation, at the moment you have been receiving even the flatteries and compliments of freedom. It cannot be from a love of liberty, that ſuch a man bows to your clamours, and re-echoes your exclamations. It cannot be from a wiſh to relieve your burdens, that ſuch a man mourns over the weight of taxation, and

ſhuts himſelf out in advance from the labours and emoluments of office, by a ſelf-denying ordinance, and cheaply purchaſes the fame of diſintereſtedneſs, by reſolutions which probably he never will be tempted to break. Undoubtedly, gentlemen, I would not wiſh to elevate the merits of the perſon I ſupport upon the errors of his opponent; and it is a new incentive to moderation, that this opponent is honoured with your favour. But great and ſacred names have been ſo abuſed during the late conteſt, ſo ſubjugated and ſacrificed to vulgar paſſions, and all the miſerable tricks of electioneering violence, that it ſeems a ſolemn duty to endeavour to draw political virtue from the confuſion in which ſhe has been buried; and to ſhew her as ſhe is, in defiance of the efforts of the intereſted, the vain, the thoughtleſs, and the hypocritical, powerful to reſtore, and mighty to ſave. The deep deriſion, the bitter mockery, which has been played off againſt the peace and happineſs of the borough, muſt awaken in all conſiderate men other feelings than thoſe of anger; but patience is not to ſubdue reproof, and there are ſituations when lamentation ought to be loud.

Pardon

Pardon me then, gentlemen, that I do not go along with you in your admiration of your new idol, and that I as little approve the means you have employed to accompliſh your purpoſes. Domeſtic peace has been attacked; female character has been traduced; the once ſacred names of Liberty and Independance have been proſtituted; and the Religion of our bleſſed Saviour has put on the form and ſemblance of that of Mahomet. The ferocious conqueror of the eaſt, with conſcience on his lips, with "the ſword in one hand, and the Coran in the other," terrifying into permanence and deciſion thoſe who heſitated, and deſtroying thoſe he could not perſuade, is a far fitter maſter for the vexed and turbid ſpirit of election incendiaries, than him who appealed to no authority but the example of his virtues and the purity of his doctrines, who pleaded no ſanction but the co-operation of heaven. How abhorrent and revolting are the vices of civilization puſhed almoſt to corruption! The ſavage follows his reſentments with a blow—deſtroys, repents, and forgets: it is reſerved for poliſhed men to take the law into their own hands for the ſake of liberty, and to burn houſes in order to promote their religion. For myſelf, I ſtill linger over the memory of Mr. Fox, and cannot immediately reconcile myſelf

to pretenſions exactly the reverſe of his. Recollecting, that, when he contended for your favour, he conſidered one of his firſt claims to depend upon the ſupport of his natural connexions, and, almoſt equally, of that part of the ariſtocracy, whoſe principal fame is interwoven with your conſtitutional privileges, the Ruſſels, the Cavendiſhes, the Howards, the Percys, and many others, whoſe names will be ever cheriſhed in this country whilſt there remains amongſt you a heart to feel, or a judgment to decide correctly; I cannot eaſily bow to a man, who claimed your regard on the ground that even his relations had forſaken him. Remembering that when the patriots of former days ſtruggled for liberty, it was that liberty, the very nature and eſſence of which is the union, not the ſeparation, of the orders of the ſtate, I am not prepared for a wild, revolutionary clamour againſt the clergy, the gentry, and the nobility of the land. Knowing that the illuſtrious perſons I have alluded to deprecated all religious clamours on any ſide whatever, that they thought all diſputes of this nature only fit for grave debate, carried on in the ſpirit of our religion itſelf, the ſpirit of peace; I can feel no inclination to admire a man, who threw in the firebrand of the cry "No popery!" to encreaſe the uſual conflagration

flagration of a general election. The authority under which he has acted in this reſpect is unfortunately high: he has taken the ſignal from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a cabinet miniſter; and had not the good ſenſe of the people reſiſted the attempt of Mr. Perceval and his abettors, we might have had much deeper cauſe of lamentation than the expulſion from the Houſe of Commons of ſome of the moſt enlightened men that ever ſat there. It is then from ſome antiquated feeling and taſte, as to the character of a popular candidate, that I cannot prevail upon myſelf to join with you in the violence and enthuſiaſm of your preſent attachment.*

* I must beg to say once for all, that nothing I have said in these pages is intended to throw the slightest reflexion on a relation of mine, who has taken a very active part in a cause, of which I think it my duty to express my disapprobation. I still think family quarrels, and even family differences, great evils; and that the public display of them (quite indeed a modern fashion) should be discountenanced by all men. The relation to whom I allude has no dark or malignant passion in his nature; nor will he be accused, I believe, of any laboured designs of self-interest. If he has gone farther in this election in promoting the popular cry, than perhaps his own calmer judgment would approve, it is from his anxiety to please that people, who are often so greatly right, as almost

I am told, you have gained a great victory. Though the nature of this victory is not very apparent, I ſubmit to you, that whatever may be your grounds of triumph, you will beſt teſtify the importance of your cauſe, and your own dignity, by calmneſs and temperance. Do not give your enemies reaſon to ſuppoſe, that you are endeavouring to make up in noiſe what you want in ſubſtance. Do you rejoice that the late aſſeſſor has deprived many leſs conſtant inhabitants than yourſelves of their franchiſe? The queſtion cannot be conſidered as ſettled, as the counſellor of the mayor is at variance in a great degree with that mayor and with himſelf, and decidedly in oppoſition to a Committee of the Houſe of Commons. A reſolution, or an act of the legiſlature is now our only reſource. Indeed it is abſolutely neceſſary, in every view, that this point of inhabitancy ſhould be finally ſettled: otherwiſe, all candidates for your favour, and you yourſelves, muſt be for ever fluctuating in a moſt diſagreeable and, in its conſequences, a moſt pernicious ſtate of uncertainty. You will not be able to make any eſtimate beforehand of the probable ſucceſs of any candidate; and

almost to sanction the idea, that they cannot be in the wrong. Individual conduct, however, cannot alter the general merits of a question.

and a poll to the laſt man, attended with all its rancour and expenſe, will be the fate of every ſucceſſive election. In order, then, to obtain a deciſion in this matter precluding contradiction, I am ſure we ſhall all unite. As to any inherent right in the conſtant reſidents of the borough to expel thoſe who are mere accidental inhabitants, it is one of thoſe metaphyſical abſtractions, which every one talks of, and no one underſtands. It is obvious, that the ſame power which gives one conſtant reſident a vote in preference to another conſtant reſident, may put an accidental inhabitant upon the ſame footing as a man who always lives in the town. The doctrine of natural rights would carry you much further than you perhaps imagine. Now in the view which I am diſpoſed to take of this nation at preſent, perceiving how ſtrongly the commercial intereſt (a term which in fact means the ſame as the independent intereſt) is diſpoſed to conteſt political honour with the landed, it ſeems incumbent upon the latter to yield no ground without a ſtruggle. It has been long aſtoniſhing to me that this ſubject of the rival ariſtocracies has not engaged more diſcuſſion than as yet it has occupied. It is as important generally, as it is intereſting to us nationally: and as curious for the philoſopher, as impoſing upon the

ſtateſman. The ſituation of this country is, I believe, perfectly new in this reſpect; but it is much to be feared that the change which is taking place amongſt us will not be for the better. Laſt year I ventured to make ſome obſervations upon this topic, in a pamphlet entitled "The Old Whig;" and the events of the late election have ſtrengthened extremely in my mind whatever I there advanced. The following lines from a philoſophical and beautiful poet, I never read without owning their juſtice.

> Ill fares the land, by luxury betray'd;
> In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
> But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
> Its vistas strike, its palaces surprize;
> While scourg'd by famine, from the smiling land,
> The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
> And while he sinks without one arm to save,
> The country blooms — a garden, and a grave.

Theſe lines are as juſt as they are poetical; and at a moment when the merchant and manufacturer have ſo much real influence from the numbers they employ, ſo much real ſplendor from the uſe and abuſe of riches, ſo much real political power from their numerous ſeats in the legiſlature, and their immenſe and various pecuniary connexions with government,—all theſe poſitive advantages being incalculably aſſiſted by

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the degradation in which the vaſt encreaſe of the peerage has ſunk the nobility, and the preſſure which falls upon the ſmall landholder from the augmentation of taxes, and the neceſſity he feels himſelf under to live at a greater rate than he can afford, that he may preſerve his ancient rank in ſociety; at this moment it ſurely behoves all men, who are truly independent and unconnected with the merchant or the landed proprietor, to take care that they are led away by no unfounded enthuſiaſm, but that they act up to the character they wiſh to maintain, and exerciſe a cool, unbiaſſed judgment in a matter ſo momentous. It cannot be too often enforced upon the minds of ſuch men, that they too are becoming a moſt important order in the ſtate, for they are the men who muſt hold the balance: but if they give themſelves fair play, if they examine the queſtion deliberately, I have no doubt to which ſide, politically ſpeaking, they will incline. In almoſt all towns and boroughs, tho' certainly leſs in our's than in many others where manufactories and trade are more extended, (tho' with us they are by no means inſignificant) I regard the independent cry as ſynonymous with the commercial cry. It tends directly to give a merchant to the Houſe of Commons rather than a proprietor of land; and in truth, it

has no other tendency. Mr. Bennett's opponent, by his mode of conducting his oppoſition here, has prepared the way for this change, and thoſe amongſt you who honeſtly thought you were contending for the independance of the borough, have merely aſſiſted an intereſt already too great (I ſpeak of the nation at large), and have ſacrificed your country to "the whiſtling of a name."

I can diſcover no reaſon for the ſmall degree of attention which the political encroachments of the merchant (I include in this term ſtockholder and manufacturer) have arreſted, but the general one, that the order moſt aggrieved are too indolent to examine a truth which they fear to avow. The mercantile body are obliged to them for their ſilence, for in the midſt of the ignorance and apathy that prevail, they have only to raiſe and encourage the cry of Independance, and make the people believe that their cauſe is one and the ſame. Now inveſtigation will ſet this matter in its true light; and I think it will appear, both from our own national experience, and from general hiſtory, that the limit to be ſet to commerce is exactly that which excludes it from much interference in ſtate affairs. Mr. Hume has ſaid, that deſpotiſm is the euthanaſia

naſia of the Britiſh conſtitution. I can conceive no mode more likely to haſten ſuch a termination, than a mercantile ariſtocracy in poſſeſſion of our towns and counties as repreſentatives, and giving their ready ſupport to all adminiſtrations, in exchange for the benefit attending loans, contracts, and fund-dealing, with titled honours, and the ſplendor of the ribbands. What endleſs wars we ſhall then have! neither an enemy nor a neutral will dare to appear on the vaſt extent of the ocean: the world will be beggared in order to gratify the yearnings of avarice, that moſt blinded of the paſſions; and then, after a plethoric conſumptive fluſh, which, however beautiful for a moment, the true ſtateſman will perceive only to lament, we ſhall be beggared in our turn: in the mean time, the maxims of government, which have prevailed in Bengal, will have been transferred to England, and we ſhall be at once poor and corrupt, curſed with the remembrance of former grandeur, only to make our degradation more complete, and our ſorrows more bitter. Empires riſe and fall, like thoſe who guide and inhabit them; and, like them, they generally carry the ſeeds of deſtruction in their conſtitutions. The analogy is perfect in all its parts, for by diligent examination, and early and anticipating remedies

dies, we may defer the fatal hour, though we cannot defend ourſelves from it altogether.

But your exultation, perhaps, riſes from this, that you have choſen a partizan of the preſent miniſtry, (for I am told that your repreſentative has now fixed upon his party) in preference to a man who ſupported the laſt. I fear the encreaſed weight of taxation, ariſing from ſubſidies abroad and a more careleſs and leſs ſkilful expenditure at home, will diminiſh your joy. The riſe of the funds is no longer a criterion of national proſperity. It is a treacherous ſymptom: it may be a mere eye-gleam, the conſequence of fever rather than health. I will go further, and ſay, that if the funds riſe at the moment when no victory is gained, but on the contrary a moſt awful ſuſpenſe prevails on account of the poſition of the French and Ruſſian armies; if they riſe, when ſo far from receiving money we are paying it away in new and extraordinary ſubſidies, without the ſanction of the parliament, and before the ſupplies are appropriated, it is ſolely becauſe it is ſuppoſed in the city that the preſent miniſters will indulge mercantile avarice at all hazards and ſacrifices, and purſue that policy, which cares not who is ruined, provided the merchant and ſtockholder are in good

humour.

humour. For the reſt, I cannot ſuppoſe you will long think greater than that of their predeceſſors the loyalty of men, who, in an unfortunate debate, accuſed our gracious Sovereign of having perſonally demanded a pledge from his miniſters that they would never propoſe a particular meaſure to the royal notice, and that too when there is every reaſon to ſuppoſe that his Majeſty was ſurrounded by intriguers, who not only adviſed, but beſet him. When I hear theſe men charging others with diſloyalty, who were allowed by the King himſelf to ſtate the reaſons of their diſmiſſal, I am reminded of a ſtory, which may do as well to explain my meaning as ſome of the illuſtrations, which deform the eloquence and interrupt the buſineſs of the Houſe of Commons. A certain ſoldier was invited by one of his comrades to dine with him, but the man refuſed, becauſe he ſuſpected the dinner was ſtolen. In the evening, however, this ſcrupulouſly honeſt fellow went off with his companion's horſe; thus ſhewing, that he who could not participate in a dinner under the ſuſpicion of its being ſtolen, could, when it ſerved his turn, commit a theft of real conſequence. So the preſent miniſters, who trembled at the bare mention of his Majeſty's name in the Houſe of Commons, though made uſe of

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by his permiſſion, could, when they found it convenient, charge their Royal Maſter with an unconſtitutional and illegal action.

> Did not the learned Glyn and Maynard
> To make good subjects traitors strain hard ?
> Was not the king, by proclamation,
> Declar'd a traitor through the nation ?

Indeed the loyalty of theſe gentlemen is like their religion: by the one the monarch is accuſed, and by the other are fellow-chriſtians perſecuted.

Of the ſame extraordinary nature is their attachment to the volunteers. They cover us with praiſes, they load us with money; but obſerve the concluſion of all this flattering kindneſs—they offer a bribe to the permanent ſerjeant of each company for every man he ſhall inliſt into the regular army. I believe there is no volunteer in the kingdom who will value very highly this tenderneſs, whatever meretricious preſents may be propoſed to make it deſirable. It calls to my recollection a certain puniſhment inflicted, I think at Venice, upon criminals, where the wretched victim was compelled to embrace the figure of a beautiful woman, from every part of whoſe body ſhot out daggers that ſtabbed him to the vitals. The

illuſtration

illuſtration indeed in our caſe can alone be applied to the inflictors, not the ſufferers; for let us hope that the majeſtic ſpirit which diſplayed itſelf in the moſt glorious exertions recorded by hiſtory, will not expire in merely affording ſpace and opportunity for the tricks of a recruiting ſerjeant.

> " Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
> That make ambition virtue! oh, farewell!
> Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
> The royal banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

Farewell indeed! and welcome in their place the purſe held up in importunately chinking triumph, on one ſide, with the reel and vociferation of drunkenneſs on the other. In the mean time, the original connexion between officers and men, ſo honourable to both parties, is broken, proſtituted, and loſt. Add to theſe ſingular meaſures, which go ſo directly to counteract the purpoſes profeſſed by them, the late extraordinary diſſolution of parliament, facetiouſly called "an appeal to the people," though on minute inveſtigation there is danger of it appearing a trial of the extent of government influence, and mercantile opulence, the latter to be compenſated for any expenſe it may be ex-

poſed

poſed to by a new harveſt ariſing from encreaſed activity in loans, ſubſidies, contracts, and all the long etceteras of a warlike adminiſtration. We have ſeen much ridicule thrown upon the late adminiſtration, under the name of "all the talents;" obſerve, I entreat you, the energetic, though yet infant exertions, of "all the vigour."

The preſent miniſters have not been long in place, but during the ſhort time they have enjoyed their ſituations, beſides numerous minor contrivances, they ſeem to have formed four great plots. The train of each is intended for conſiderable length of time and ſpace, and each has ſtated periods of exploſion. However, the firſt general effect, depending upon the united force of all, was to have taken place during the confuſion of the laſt fortnight; and indeed, if the ſcheme had fully ſucceeded, the conſequences would have been as impoſing and extenſive as the moſt vigorous artiſt could poſſibly have deſired. The firſt of theſe plots was the popiſh plot, by which was hazarded the deſtruction of all the pride and glory of the firſt proteſtant empire in the world. Then followed the ſhipping plot, in conducting which our commerce will ſuffer as much as our religion was in danger

ger of ſuffering, an American war being probably added to our preſent ſtate of general hoſtility. A continental plot, by which our troops are again to try their fortune, where, from cauſes too obvious, they have ſo often failed, and Auſtria is to be ſtimulated, (if poſſible) by our ſubſidies and intrigues, into the extreme hazard of a new and immediate coalition againſt France; laſtly, a volunteer plot, which will coſt the nation about two millions a year, and a degree of diſgrace to the volunteers themſelves, beyond the calculations of money to eſtimate. Theſe vigorous proceedings, iſſuing from the cradle of this Herculean adminiſtration, ſhew us what we are to expect when the miniſters ſhall have attained their full ſtrength.

In the mean time, I muſt be allowed to regret the diſmiſſal of the late adminiſtration, the more ſilent bleſſings of whoſe policy (ſilent here, but not in Africa) chiefly appeared in the abolition of the ſlave trade, a wiſe management of our commercial regulations, the limited-ſervice bill, and financial plans and reforms — the former as ſkilful and conſoling, as the latter were upright and juſt. It muſt be confeſſed, however, that had not the preſent miniſters taken ſuch pains to diſplay themſelves, by their addreſſes

and

and circular letters, they ought to have been conſidered as completely untried. To whoſe ſyſtem of politics do they adhere? Not to Mr. Pitt's, for they come in, as Mr. Addington did, expreſsly to withhold that very meaſure, on account of which Mr. Pitt retired from office, not being able to carry it into effect. How perverſe is human nature! When the eloquence of Mr. Pitt was to rouſe to war, though in defiance of all paſt experience, and of diſaſters as ſtupendous in their appearance, as dreadful in their conſequences, it was ever irreſiſtible; and the mere remembrance of it is ſtill almoſt as powerful as when the mighty maſter himſelf was living; but when religious toleration was his theme, with univerſal hiſtory to back him, then did his words fall cold and lifeleſs; and even his choſen friends, the moſt cheriſhed objects of his patronage, do not heſitate to inſult his memory by proclaiming the church to be in danger on the revival of meaſures, which are only not his, becauſe they are leſs extenſive than his. For the truth of this aſſertion, I refer to general recollection, and to Lord Grenville's admirable letter to the ſecretary of the Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge. You will pardon me, if I prefer the names of Grenville, Howick, Holland, and Petty, to

thoſe of Melville, Hawkeſbury, Perceval, and Canning; and if I lament that you have choſen a partizan of the latter gentlemen, rather than a ſupporter of the former.

Upon the whole, I feel myſelf perfectly juſtified for not joining in your preſent exultation. If I am aſked to explain my motives for this publication, it might be a ſufficient anſwer to ſay, that as you have thought me of conſequence enough to make me the object of your condemnation, it is natural for me to wiſh to be heard in my defence. This, however, is not my motive: or it is the weakeſt of my motives. Every man ſhould ſerve the public as much as he can; but (once more to quote a writer, equally remarkable for the wiſdom of his precepts and the dignity of his ſentiments) to be pleaſed with his ſervices, is your affair, not his. The chief ſubject and tendency of theſe pages appear to me of extreme importance. The people of England, politically ſpeaking, ſeem to be divided into three great claſſes — the ancient landed proprietors, whether peers or commoners; the great traders, whether merchant, manufacturer, or ſtockholder, with their immediate deſcendants; and, thirdly, that order of men, who with ſmall patrimonial poſſeſſions, or

the fruits of their own ſucceſsful exertions, are in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word independent of either of the former, yet not advanced ſo high as to be within the reach of any political temptation. In the ſtruggle which is now taking place between the opulent trader and the ancient landed proprietor, this laſt claſs of men will have to play a very eſſential part. As in the higher region of politics the funds are the great inſtrument of connexion between the ſtate and the merchant; in the lower, and amongſt us, the power attending the vaſt acquiſition of wealth, and the employment given by manufactories, form the link between him and the people. It is for the independent, the ſtrictly independent part of the community to decide whether they will aſſiſt him in taking the place of the ancient landed proprietor; whether they will exchange the pride of wealth for the pride of family as a political feeling, for one of theſe ſentiments we muſt have; whether they will chooſe to transfer thoſe councils which have preſided over our Indian ſettlements to the cabinet of England; whether they would wiſh their ſovereign to be ſurrounded by ſuch men as the Marquis of Rockingham, by the Cavendiſhes, the Ruſſels, the Percys, the Talbots, the Howards, and whatever other names our hiſtory

or

or the virtues of their preſent poſſeſſors ſanctify; or the endleſs tribe, whom the city may ſend out with retinues to the full as ſplendid as their's. This, gentlemen, is the queſtion. It has been the policy of the laſt twenty years, to degrade in every manner the ancient landed proprietor, and to ſubſtitute in his place the opulent merchant. The evil ſeems to me to aſſail the conſtitution in a vital part; but you may in ſome meaſure alleviate and check it. The domeſtic policy of Mr. Pitt in this reſpect, was incalculably miſchievous, but you may counteract its effects. England will fall, and ſhe will fall when all men ſhall be admiring her ſplendor. In the midſt of ſhouts, revelry, and riot, reſounded from quays, and manufactories, and cuſtom-houſes, and ſtock-exchanges, ſeconded with equal clamour, though leſs merriment, by conventicles and field-preachings, this once chaſte and venerable matron, the mother and nurſe of ſo many generations of warriors, ſtateſmen, ſcholars and poets, her ſimple though ſomewhat ſevere natural graces no longer admired by her taſteleſs ſons, but exchanged for all ſorts of foreign ornaments brought from the eaſt and the weſt, with powders, and paints, and paſtes, and patches, concealing from unſkilful eyes the fatal diſeaſe that is conſuming her

life, her artificial colours miſtaken for the glow of health, the fever of intoxication for the vigour of her conſtitution, her zoneleſs waiſt for power to repel the cold; thus degraded and honoured, thus ſinking and flattered, thus polluted and applauded, the glory of England will paſs away for ever. Foreſeeing the fate common to her with all other nations, and thinking I perceive the ſeeds of thoſe diſorders peculiar to her by which her deſtruction will be accelerated and accompliſhed, fearleſs of a world armed againſt her while we are true to ourſelves, or rather while we are ourſelves, I would aim at that ſatisfaction, which may hereafter ariſe from the reflexion that I have employed my voice and my pen, as far as opportunity and the ſphere of my fortune permitted me, in defence of that genuine liberty ſynonymous with our country, reſting upon the union of all the orders of the ſtate; the great, refined by rank and the remembrance of inherited virtues; the rich diffuſing the bleſſings of induſtry and comfort amongſt thoſe below them; the poor happy in that diffuſion, and ſtrong in the conſciouſneſs of their privileges, which they are too proud to barter for a bribe, and too wiſe to ſacrifice to a name; that genuine liberty, the great bequeſt of anceſtors who won it, and ſealed it by their blood;

founded upon the conviction of the * weakneſs, rather than the ſtrength of our common nature, and for that reaſon binding all men and all claſſes of men together, who co-operate, but are not confuſed, who unite, but are ſtill ſubordinate; that genuine liberty, which has for its origin the wiſdom of ages, for its code, the morality of the goſpel, for its ſeat, the heart, and for its eſſence, peace.

* Pope has expressed this idea with his usually comprehensive and splendid brevity. Be it repeated again and again, that politics are but morals extended, and the application of the four following verses is obvious. Whole volumes will not set this uproar for independance in a light more just.

Heaven forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call, [OF ALL.
AND ONE MAN'S WEAKNESS GROWS THE STRENGTH

Essay on Man—Epist. 2.

THE END.

Eddowes, Printers.